

Los Angeles Audubon Society | laaudubon.org

May – June 2019 | Volume 85 Number 5

# WESTERN TANAGER

*Los Angeles Skyline, Photo by Carol Babeli from the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook*





Los Angeles Audubon Society  
 P.O. Box 411301  
 Los Angeles, CA 90041-8301  
[www.losangelesaudubon.org](http://www.losangelesaudubon.org)  
 (323) 876-0202  
[LAAS@laaudubon.org](mailto:LAAS@laaudubon.org)

**BOARD OFFICERS & DIRECTORS**

<b>President</b>	Margot Griswold	<a href="mailto:mgriswold@landiq.com">mgriswold@landiq.com</a>
<b>Past President</b>	Travis Longcore	<a href="mailto:travislongcore@laaudubon.org">travislongcore@laaudubon.org</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Robert Jeffers	<a href="mailto:jeffers@laaudubon.org">jeffers@laaudubon.org</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Nicole Lannoy Lawson	<a href="mailto:nicolelawson@laaudubon.org">nicolelawson@laaudubon.org</a>
<b>Directors at Large</b>	Catherine Rich	Not Published

**COMMITTEES**

<b>Conservation</b>	Travis Longcore	<a href="mailto:travislongcore@laaudubon.org">travislongcore@laaudubon.org</a>
<b>Education</b>	Margot Griswold	<a href="mailto:mgriswold@landiq.com">mgriswold@landiq.com</a>
<b>Membership</b>	Position Open	<a href="mailto:membership@laaudubon.org">membership@laaudubon.org</a>

**PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES**

<b>Field Trips</b>	Nick Freeman	<a href="mailto:nmfreeman@earthlink.net">nmfreeman@earthlink.net</a>
<b>Bird Walks</b>	Eleanor Osgood	<a href="mailto:gardenbird1@att.net">gardenbird1@att.net</a>
<b>Monthly Programs</b>	Travis Longcore	<a href="mailto:travislongcore@laaudubon.org">travislongcore@laaudubon.org</a>
<b>Rare Bird Alert</b>	Jon Fisher	<a href="mailto:JonF60@hotmail.com">JonF60@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Schreiber Grant Program</b>	Ryan Harrigan	<a href="mailto:ryanharrigan@laaudubon.org">ryanharrigan@laaudubon.org</a>

**STAFF**

<b>Director of Communications &amp; Development</b>	Carol Babeli	<a href="mailto:carolbabeli@laaudubon.org">carolbabeli@laaudubon.org</a>
<b>Director of Outdoor Education</b>	Cindy Hardin	<a href="mailto:cindyhardin@laaudubon.org">cindyhardin@laaudubon.org</a>
<b>Director of Environmental Education</b>	Stacey Vigallon	<a href="mailto:tern@laaudubon.org">tern@laaudubon.org</a>
<b>Volunteer Coordinator</b>	Cindy Hardin	<a href="mailto:cindyhardin@laaudubon.org">cindyhardin@laaudubon.org</a>
<b>Member Services</b>	Susan Castor	<a href="mailto:membership@laaudubon.org">membership@laaudubon.org</a>
<b>Website Liason</b>	Nicole Lawson	<a href="mailto:nicolelawson@laaudubon.org">nicolelawson@laaudubon.org</a>

*The Western Tanager* is the chapter newsletter of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, published online bi-monthly in PDF format. Sept/Oct, Nov/Dec, Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/June, July/Aug. Articles, letters drawings and photographs concerning conservation, birding, chapter activities, and articles of interest to the membership are welcome for submission. Please send copy as Microsoft Word, RTF documents, or plain text files to [westernanager@laaudubon.org](mailto:westernanager@laaudubon.org). Photos should be high resolution (300ppi) .jpg or .tif files. **Submissions are due the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month to be included in the following issue.** All rights reserved. All photographs are used by permission and are copyrighted material of the credited photographers.

<b>Editor</b>	Linda Oberholtzer	<a href="mailto:westernanager@laaudubon.org">westernanager@laaudubon.org</a>
<b>Design &amp; Layout</b>	Susan Castor	<a href="mailto:susancastor@laaudubon.org">susancastor@laaudubon.org</a>
<b>Scientific Advisor</b>	Kimball Garrett	<a href="mailto:kgarrett@nhm.org">kgarrett@nhm.org</a>

© 2019 Los Angeles Audubon Society

## Members Are Invited

Los Angeles Audubon Society members are invited to attend the *annual membership meeting* on **Saturday, June 22, 2019 from 1–2 p.m.** The meeting will be held in the visitor center theater room at the *Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park* located at 6300 Hetzler Road, Culver City. We encourage you to attend to learn about recent accomplishments and future goals of the organization.



**LOCATION:**

*Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook*  
 6300 Hetzler Rd  
 Culver City, CA 90232

To confirm your membership status, please call or write to: [membership@laaudubon.org](mailto:membership@laaudubon.org), (323) 876-0202.

## THE BIRDS OF LOS ANGELES NEED YOU.

Become a member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society to directly help the birds of our region.

Your membership supports the organization's efforts in the following areas:

- RECREATION | • EDUCATION | • CONSERVATION | • RESTORATION

Individual membership only \$25 per year.

Join today at: <https://www.laaudubon.org/membership>

**Mailing Address:** PO Box 411301, Los Angeles CA 90041-8301  
**Phone:** (323) 876-0202

# LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY AWARDED \$10,000 FROM CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS FOUNDATION INCREASING YOUTH ACCESS TO STATE PARKS GRANT

This grant from the California State Parks Foundation will enable Los Angeles Audubon to increase the reach of its Baldwin Hills Youth Leadership and Summer Fellows Program and connect hundreds of urban students to parks like the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park.

The Baldwin Hills Youth Leadership and Summer Fellows Program is all about increasing youth access to nature and is part of LA Audubon's ongoing commitment to engaging urban youth in nature conservation activities. The Youth Leadership and Summer Fellows Program is an after-school program that provides weekly nature activities conducted at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park. LA Audubon also offers an elementary and middle school field trip program at adjacent Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area where College Docents lead approximately 2500 students on educational walks through the park each year, introducing students to native upland habitat and experiencing the Ballona Creek Watershed.

Since 2008, Los Angeles Audubon has steadily grown the Baldwin Hills Youth Program from 12 students the first year to now averaging 50 students each year. We've reached out to 4 high schools, inviting hundreds of students to participate either in the Baldwin Hills program and/or as a volunteer at restoration and park appreciation events held in the Park. The California State Parks Foundation has played an important role in helping to fund fellowships for high school graduates to serve as environmental leaders engaging park goers and community volunteers in habitat restoration. Student interest continues to grow for our Baldwin Hills Program as word of mouth shared with other students is very positive. Program Alumni younger siblings sign up for the program and we've seen entire families grow up with us in the program! Many alumni return to work as summer fellows and some are now paid employees of Los Angeles Audubon.

The Program has helped to launch the next generation of environmental stewards. Alumni who are recent college graduates have served as interns in program collaborations with Environment for the Americas, studying shorebirds and conducting bilingual outreach. We have alumni now serving in Teach For America working as educators in LAUSD, employed by California State Parks, serving as endangered species field technicians, certified as California Naturalists through the University of California, and graduate degree holders in environmental management.

Los Angeles Audubon's work in environmental education, community outreach and habitat restoration/stewardship provides an important service to urban youth and their communities by introducing them to ways in which they can enjoy and value nature and open green spaces.





# EARTH DAY 2019

By Carol Babeli, Director of Communications and Development

The Los Angeles Audubon Society provided the expertise, tools and support team for this year's [2019] Earth Day habitat restoration event at BALDWIN HILLS SCENIC OVERLOOK STATE PARK, hosted by the CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS FOUNDATION.

Senator Holly Mitchell and Assembly member Sydney Kamlager-Dove kicked off the morning activities with a welcome speech, thanking the volunteers for taking action in their community.

The event attracted nearly 80 community volunteers including employees of United, SoCalGas, Target, and Sony Pictures Entertainment. Dr. Margot Griswold and LA Audubon staff and student interns guided the group on identifying native plants vs. invasive weeds. The group planted approximately 165 coastal sage scrub plants and removed 107 30-gallon bags of invasive plants.

Los Angeles Audubon maintains a year-round environmental stewardship program and greenhouse at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook that provides under-served youth with internship opportunities and leadership skills.

We thank the California State Parks Foundation and the local community for their ongoing support of nature in LA!



*LA Audubon Staff & Volunteers information tables at the Earth Day 2019 habitat restoration event at BHSO*



*Senator Holly Mitchell and Assembly member Sydney Kamlager-Dove with Community Volunteers*

# A RAINY YEAR SERVES TO REMIND US

By Cindy Hardin, LA Audubon Director of Outdoor Education

The significant amount of rain received in Southern California during this past winter was much in the news, and celebrated or bemoaned, depending on your point of view. The paucity of precipitation over the last several years left many Angelenos with distant memory of what a real rainstorm feels like, me included. Images of rain swollen rivers, landslides, road closures and flooded streets were dramatic reminders of the type of winter that had not been experienced for quite some time. In the aftermath, the much heralded “Super Bloom” of wildflowers brought people to the outdoors in droves.

On a very local level, there was equally dramatic evidence of the rainy season at the Ballona Wetlands. Although some will tell you differently, historically Ballona was primarily a fresh water wetland. Prior to the channelization of Ballona Creek and the diversion of rainfall through storm drains and directly out to the ocean, vernal ponds and freshwater streams coursed through the marsh. Large sandbars would often close off the mouth of Ballona Creek, backing up the water flowing off our hills to create seasonal freshwater habitat, providing ideal conditions for frogs, insects and overwintering migratory birds. During this especially rainy winter, visual proof of this historic past was abundant. The salt panne was covered in standing water for months, and small waterborne invertebrates that remain dormant in dry conditions came alive.

This provided fodder for hundreds of Black Bellied Plovers, which were present throughout the winter. Ponds came to life below the Playa del Rey bluffs, and Pacific Chorus Frogs are still filling the nights with their ridiculously loud song. Normally dry trails flooded, and lichen and mushrooms turned up everywhere.



*The historic salt panne at Ballona. Standing water covered the entirety of the salt panne for most of the winter.*



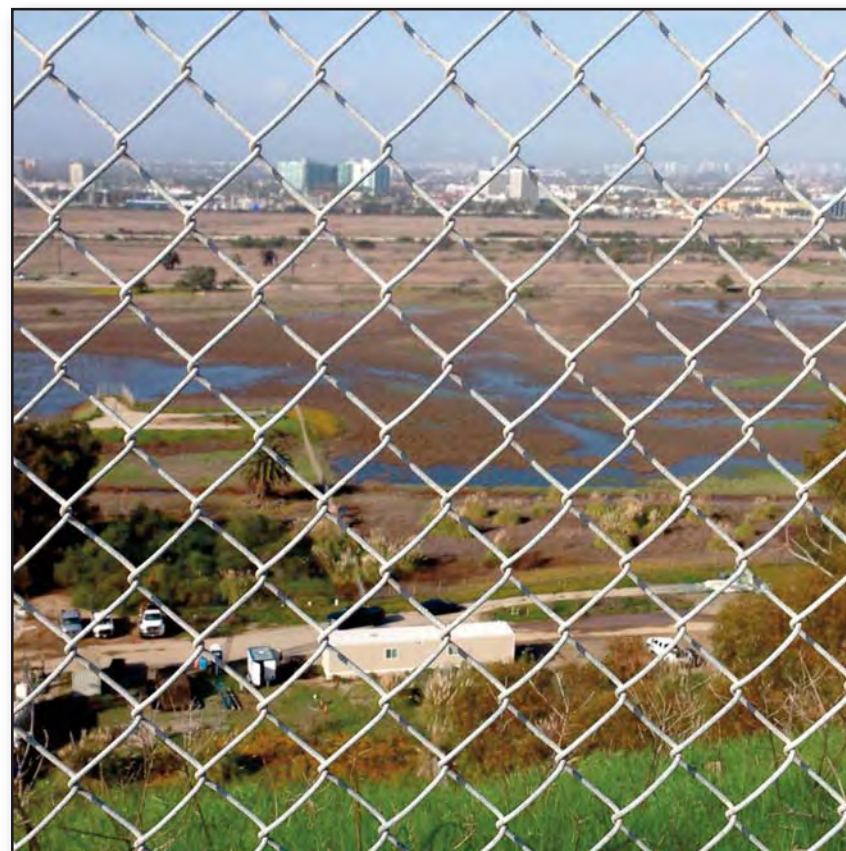


*This is the trail that school children use to access the wetlands for their field trips. More than a few trips had to be re-scheduled due to rainy conditions.*



*Moisture loving mushrooms were popping up everywhere!*

The part of the wetlands known as Area B south displayed accumulated water and rivulets during January, February and most of March. This section lies south of Culver and directly below the bluffs, and still has a major stand of Willow trees, even during dry years.



*Large ponds below the bluffs were present for weeks after the last rainfalls. Meandering streams connected some of these ponds.*

The Willow trees are indicative of the high level of groundwater that is always present at the site. The rains of 2018-2019 re-charged this aquifer, and allowed rainfall to accumulate at the surface, enhancing the habitat for countless species. It was quite a year. During some storms, huge volumes of water ran through swollen gutters and over paved roadways, mimicking ancient streams that once flowed freely through the hilly terrain above the lowlands of Ballona.





*No need to drive great distances to see a “Super Bloom”. It is here in our own backyard, and can be viewed at our next Open Wetlands on May 4th.  
Photo by Jonathan Coffin*

It seems that the rains have now abated for the season, and extravagant displays of wildflowers are now present throughout the wetlands. Lupine, sunflowers, deerweed and many other natives are showing off their spring finery.

Although much of the standing water has evaporated, left in its place are vast expanses of green that perfectly outline the shape of the ponds and streams that were present for months. These “souvenirs of the season” can be easily viewed from above along the One Westbluff Trail, just off Lincoln Boulevard.

Most of the shots that accompany this article were taken from this trail, which is open to the public every day from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. This walking path overlooks all of Ballona, and features beautiful native plants and their accompanying pollinators, birds and other wildlife. Right now is a great opportunity to be reminded of what once was, and could be again if decisions are made to encourage more freshwater habitat at Ballona. As most of you know, the revised Environmental Impact Report regarding the future of Ballona is due to come out at some point this year. It would be most appropriate and correct if one of the alternatives offered allowed the freshwater that was once an elemental part of the wetlands to re-establish itself.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Army Corp of Engineers, and other stakeholders: Are you listening to the land? And to the frogs? 🐸



*Although the water has diminished, the plants that are now present echo the shape of the standing water that was present for most of the season. Note the curvilinear course of the vegetation, which traces the meandering path that water takes naturally.*

# INTERPRETING NATURE

## *Growth and Reflection in Joshua Tree National Park*

By Ingrid Carrillo and Edgar Pedroza

*On December 31, 2018 to January 4, 2019 eight Los Angeles Audubon staff and program alumni received the opportunity to participate in a backpacking trip with Outward Bound California in the Joshua Tree National Park backcountry. Both Outward Bound California and Los Angeles Audubon worked together to grant scholarships to all participants. Some of the scholarship recipients were part of the Baldwin Hills Parklands Conservation Certificate Program and others were alumni of the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program. Five of the participants that were part of the Baldwin Hills Parklands Certificate Program were Jamie, Racine, Alex, Felistus, Edgar, and Maya. The remaining two, Ingrid and Behtsabe, were Greenhouse Program Alumna. Almost all of us were new to backpacking. Edgar Pedroza and Ingrid Carrillo are currently Los Angeles Audubon staff members and they are also the writers of this reflection. They share their story in the style of a journal where they express their experience through both perspectives.*

### DAY 1:

**Ingrid** — The first thing I saw pulling into the parking lot was snow. There were eight backpacks set up in a circle filled with clothes in them that I immediately layered on because I wasn't equipped for the cold I was experiencing. I felt like I was in an episode of man vs wild, in this case woman vs Joshua tree. It was my first time ever backpacking. Beginning the hike to the camping site I started to look around at everyone and wondered if they were all as uncomfortable as I was. I looked towards Edgar and asked him if it's supposed to hurt this much and he answered, "well it's not supposed to feel good." During the night all I heard was the tarp slapping back and forth because of the high wind. The winds were so rough I truly thought the tarp would go flying and we'd be left shelterless. The girls got up to the sound of both side of the tarp disconnecting from the rocks holding it down. We all started yelling in fear because none of us knew what to do. The instructors came to our rescue and started to help us fix our shelter. Jamie and I held on to the pole in the center to keep it straight, we held on to that pole like we were holding on to our lives. Though clearly afraid, we both laughed. I didn't know whether the situation was humorous or we were just that nervous. I remember thinking to myself, "is this karma for something I did, what did I get myself into, is this going to be every night?" As these questions rush into my mind I heard Felistus counting down. Was I spending my new years grabbing on to a metal pole for dear life? Yes.



*Outward Bound California instructors and Los Angeles Audubon backpacking group, hiking to the first camping site.*



**Edgar** — Immediately after stepping out of the truck I was greeted with the cold, strong winds of the Mojave Desert. I briefly introduced myself to the Course Directors, Kenja and Wendy, along with our instructors, Danelia (D-Low) and Lauren. We had to skip all formalities and shift into survival mode since we were obviously not prepared to deal with the sub-freezing temperature and high winds. I added layers with intense urgency. It never became so clear to me that the only thing between myself and the elements were only sheets of fabric on my body. It felt as if the desert knew we were coming and wanted to display its power before these unsuspecting city folks. The first time wearing the pack all I could think about was the weight—sixty pounds! I came to truly understand the meaning of the weight carried the more time we spent in the backcountry. The packs are heavy, but we eventually learn that we are more than strong enough to carry the load. After setting up camp, we went to bed by 8pm. The plan was to rest in preparation for the full day ahead, but the desert had other ideas. The winds got stronger around midnight as if in celebration of the New Year. Our shelters were being blown away one by one. I had no doubt in my mind that every one of us was awake at that point. I was able to rest enough to find the winds' midnight antics amusing. I couldn't help but smile as I heard shrieks and laughter mixed into the storm.

#### DAY 2:

**Ingrid** — The desert announced it was morning by shining its bright light onto my face. I got up and immediately felt pain in my feet. It was a weird type of pain, my feet felt cold and numb to the point it hurt to stand or walk on them. I threw on my hiking boots and ran around camp —that didn't work. I entered the shelter and removed my shoes and socks in hopes to warm up my feet using my hands. I was shocked once I saw my feet: red, white, pale blue like a weird American flag. I asked Jamie, who happens to be an EMT worker, to describe the symptoms of frostbite. She informed me that the skin looks like candle wax with reddish borders. I responded, "Yup, I think I have first degree frostbite." I was told in the beginning of the course that cotton retained moisture, so we were only allowed to wear wool. I didn't listen because I assumed that if I layered 3 pairs of socks it wouldn't matter if one of them was cotton. It mattered. As soon as I took those evil socks off my life got instantly better. Later that day, it was time for the first day rock climbing. I sat out most of the time. I was too busy mentally and physically preparing myself. Mentally because I'm afraid of heights, and physically be-



*Outward Bound instructor passing by campsite during sunset.*



*Racine, taking a scenic break before continuing his climb.*

cause my body was so cold it felt immobile. After lots of contemplation and running in place I was ready to go. D-Low volunteered to be my belayer (the person responsible for your rope and safety while you're climbing) because I showed signs of uncertainty. I made it about 10 feet up without thinking. I wasn't able to make it to the top, but I was able to challenge myself in trusting my belayer and the rope. When it was time to go back to camp I kept thinking to myself, I should've taken advantage of this opportunity. I promised myself I would climb more the next chance I got.

**Edgar** — The morning of the second day was a low point in the trip, pretty much for everyone. My energy was low and I was not excited to climb. Even though the sun had risen, it was still very cold. It also did not help that the climbing wall was in the shade, depriving us of the luminous desert sun. I felt cold-blooded and sluggish from lack of warmth. It was a relatively easy day in terms of activity. The climb site was a short hike from camp. I could see it when I walked up the hill that our camp was tucked against. It's only initially that a new environment seems foreign. I felt like a coyote cub emerging from its den eager to investigate the surrounding desert. At moments I lamented being tied to the group and having such a tight schedule. I felt the urge to explore all the hidden nooks and crannies that I know exist somewhere in the desert, the places hidden away from the pounding gusts and frigid cold. I wanted to be free to roam the desert. Somehow it didn't seem so large the second day and gradually the land around me began to shrink. Or was it that it was expanding? I no longer cared. After the climb, we raced against the sun to squeeze in a boulder scramble. Walking in a tight line, we made our way up the hill. It was a fun climb and we made it to the summit shortly. The view revealed the desert valley around us. I have always been interested in navigation and quickly made a mental note of the key landmarks in the area. This allowed me to develop a mental map of our camp. It was then I realized we had taken baby steps away from civilization.

### DAY 3:

**Ingrid** — The hike leaving camp felt longer than it did the first day. I think much of it had to do with the slight upward incline. After two days of complaining about the cold I began to complain about the heat, it never stopped. The desert isn't very forgiving. I kept repeating to myself, "I will make it, just keep on pushing." I challenged myself that day, those long three miles. We all checked in with each other and made sure we were staying hydrated. It's times like these that we need the most support from others to help maintain a positive mindset. Having support from your peers makes a difference and is what helped us get to our destination. In the desert, everything requires think-



*Ingrid, Jamie, and Behtsabe checking harnesses before their climb.*

ing, strategizing, and planning. You must think before you act, strategize on how much energy and resources you're using, and create a legitimate plan. Once we got to our destination we needed to restock. It was our job to redistribute water and food weight. We all had an assigned task — you were either doing food, trash, water, or equipment. Every job is equally important. We learned to rely on each other and to hold each other accountable. Lessons like these are best learned when you are put in challenging situations, which is why I think this trip is important for students to attend.

**Edgar** — The morning of our third day we got the opportunity to apply packing techniques. Only ten minutes behind schedule, we made our way to the meeting point. I felt a bit more comfortable on this hike despite the added incline. My body was beginning to adjust all on its own. It was another story for the rookies in our group who struggled to keep a steady pace. I saw how quickly we formed support networks within our group. We were all lifting each other up, and it all happened so organically. I realized that hierarchies and roles can serve to limit us. While they do provide guidelines for specific tasks and duties that need to be accomplished, we must not cling to them, and they should not define us or our experience. Due to the government shutdown, it



had been unclear whether we would be allowed to continue the course, but we got word that we had obtained special permission to stay inside the park. Waves of excitement permeated all over my body and a grin spread across my face. I wanted to head out to the second site ASAP, but we had to restock food and water first. After making sure we had everything we needed, we ate a quick lunch and prepared to hike out. The lack of quality sleep and the stress of the desert were taking a toll. Although I was reaching my limit physically, the surrounding Joshua Tree forest and rock formations filled me with awe and wonder. I thought about the adventures still awaiting me and moved forward with steady determination.

#### DAY 4

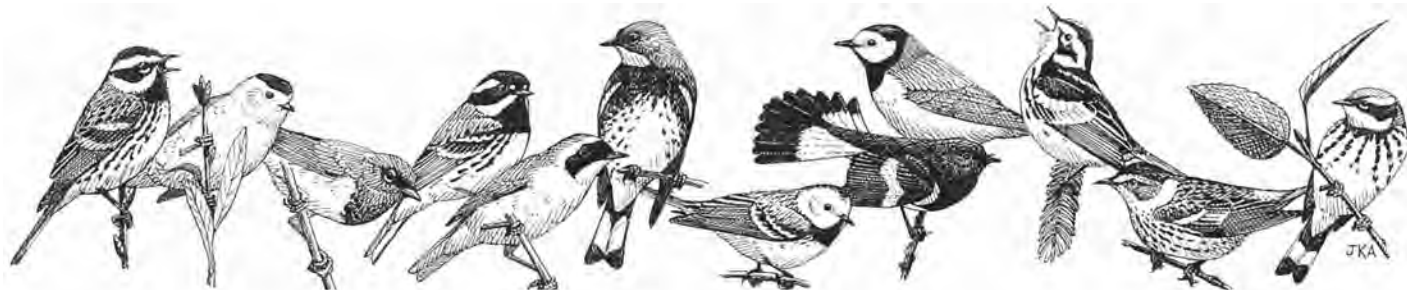
**Ingrid** — On our official last full day in the desert I felt so eager to climb that I volunteered to go first. My fears began to vanish and excitement flooded my body. I trusted my body and my belayer more than I did the first time. The trust I put into them and myself was what got me all the way up 30 feet. I looked down and saw everyone cheering for me. I felt so accomplished, I wanted to stay up there forever. After having fun testing our skills at the climbing spot we moved on to rappelling. You'd think after rock climbing this would be a breeze but it wasn't. I felt the tension and anxiety levels rise. Each person that went down stayed at the bottom ready to greet the next person with a warm hug and a high-five. It amazes me how a simple gesture has so much affect on your self-esteem. During our final night we had the pin ceremony which is where you express why you think you've deserved the Outward Bound pin. D-Low started the ceremony by reading aloud to the group a powerful writing she had written earlier in the day during our reflection time. I layed down on my back and looked up at the stars. I had something originally written for the ceremony, but after listening to her speech and feeling the warmth of her words warming my spirit, I dismissed what I had first wanted to say. I remembered why I came here and what my passions were: I love people, I love nature, and I want to make sure these spaces are always available to people of all backgrounds. The ceremonial pin I received was a promise to keep doing what I love and to keep helping others. That is what I learned from this trip, to give meaning to everything I do. I think everyone deserves an opportunity like this, to look deep into themselves and realize what's truly important. When you're away from the city and away from distractions you have no other choice but to be introspective. Things that usually cross your mind in the city don't cross your mind when you're in the wilderness, and I remind myself to make note of that. Appreciate those moments of pure freedom.

**Edgar** — Our last full day at Joshua Tree was also our busiest. The instructors had a full schedule of climbing and repelling planned. The excitement in the group for this second



*Felistus, assembling lunch for the rest of the backpacking group.*

climb was much greater compared to the first. Many first-time climbers went much higher than they thought possible. There was cheering and laughter, but most importantly there was warm sunlight. It is not often that I get access to a world famous climbing site. I decided that I was going to take a more challenging route. The only thing that existed at that moment was the rock and my body pressed up against it. My heart was pounding and I was scared. The fear slowly faded the higher up I climbed. Whenever I felt stuck I just had to remember to stay calm and not give up. I learned that having the tenacity to never give up can have a big pay-off. As every climber went up the wall, we built upon our experiences and learned from each others' mistakes. We were learning together and helping to surpass our limits. I was amazed by the growth within the group that day. I saw people initially frightened and not confident in their abilities in Day 2 now smiling as they clung onto the ancient granite mounds. What had changed over the last few days to cause such a transformation? Where had this strength come from? It was there all along, just waiting to be discovered. Therein lies the importance of placing ourselves in environments that will not only challenge us but make us uncomfortable and reveal the strength within us. 🐦



## BIRDS OF THE SEASON — April 2019, by Jon Fisher

**M**arch and April in southern California encompass a great deal of change in the avian world. Passerine migration transforms from a trickle to a flood, wintering birds are leaving on their various schedules and breeding activity is pervasive.

From the first early arriving passerines to the waves of birds encountered in April and May, spring migration is a remarkable event to witness. While the quality and quantity of birds can vary from day to day—often due to factors we've yet to understand—this is a fantastic time to take to the field.

Shorebirds can briefly be seen in their breeding colors. Loons and scoters are streaming northward along the coast. The weather is generally pleasant and the landscape is lush. It could well be argued that this time of year offers more for birders than any other.

As usual, given the diversity of habitats in Los Angeles County, the variety of birds present in March and April was substantial. Wintering vagrants gradually began to disappear as spring progressed, and there were a few new discoveries to keep things interesting. Typi-

cally for this time of year, reports of new vagrants were comparatively scarce.

The wintering “**Eurasian**” **Green-winged Teal** continued at the San Gabriel Coastal Basin Spreading Grounds in Pico Rivera through March 1.

A **White-winged Scoter** was off Dockweiler State Beach in El Segundo from February 23, with four present on March 14 and two still there on April 2 (Richard Barth). Another continued at on Westlake Lake in Westlake Village through March 15. Four **Black Scoters** were off Dockweiler State Beach on March 1, with one seen there on April 14 (Richard Barth).

Two **Inca Doves** were at the small community of Lake Los Angeles in the east Antelope Valley from March 17-29 (Mark & Janet Scheel). A tiny population of these birds has persisted here for many years.

**American Oystercatcher** sightings in the county are on the rise, although the various reports may involve the same one or two individuals. The bird at Royal Palms Beach continued through March 23. Others were at

Leo Carrillo State Beach on March 18 (Chris Dean), at Cabrillo Beach Pier on March 27 (Jonathan Nakai) and at Malibu Lagoon from March 27-April 13 (Frank Gilliland).

Though numbers have declined in recent years, a handful of **Mountain Plovers** were in the east Antelope Valley this past winter, with the most recent report being ten on February 24 (John Garrett).

Two **Black Turnstones**, rare inland, were at the Lancaster Water Treatment Ponds on April 16 (Becky Turley).

A **Black-legged Kittiwake**, rare even on the immediate coast, was at Malibu Lagoon on April 14 (Curtis Marantz).

Still quite scarce, but increasing in county waters was a **Brown Booby** at San Clemente Island on February 26 (Cody Lane).

A **Neotropic Cormorant** continued at Echo Park Lake through March 3. Another- or perhaps the same bird—was at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas from March 24–April 15 (Rod Higbie, Ken Burgdorff). Though vastly



outnumbered by the ubiquitous Double-crested Cormorant, birders should be on the lookout for Neotropics. It's almost certain that additional records will follow.

Unusual inland were nine **Brown Pelicans** over Brown's Canyon Road near Porter Ranch on February 23 (Ryan Spiro).

Two **California Condors** were near Whittaker Peak on March 9 (Kris Ohlenkamp) and the **Zone-tailed Hawk** in Monrovia continued near Grand Park through April 14.

A **Burrowing Owl** was at Cal State Dominguez Hills on February 22 (John Thomlinson). Of note was a small group of **Burrowing Owls** discovered at the LAX Dunes Preserve in El Segundo. Once an upscale residential community, airport noise and eminent domain eventually led to its demise. The site now been restored to a relatively natural state. Though the airport noise continues, that doesn't seem to bother the owls. Up to ten have been observed here. No breeding has been documented to date, though that would definitely seem possible.

The **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** continued at the Sepulveda Basin in Van Nuys through March 25. Others were at Huntington Park Civic Park from February 28–March 29 (Albert Linowski) and at Pearblossom Park in Pearblossom on March 15 (Kimball Garrett).

**Northern "Yellow-shafted" Flickers** were at Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena on March 1 (Javier Vasquez), at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park in Harbor City through

March 31, at Augustus Hawkins Natural Park in Los Angeles on March 30 (Richard Barth) and at Madrona Marsh in Torrance from March 30–31 (Dinuk Magamma).

Merlin subspecies other than the *columbarius* subspecies are rare in the county. A "**Black**" **Merlin** was on San Clemente Island on February 28 (Alex Wilson) and another continued at the Bette Davis Picnic Area in Glendale through March 8. A pale "**Prairie**" **Merlin** was at the LADWP property in Los Angeles on March 8 (Brad Rumble). Scarce on the coastal slope was a **Prairie Falcon** in Big Tujunga Wash on February 24 (Brad Rumble).

The wintering **Ash-throated Flycatcher** at Madrona Marsh was reported through March 20.

Wintering **Tropical Kingbirds** continued at Entradero Park in Torrance through April 18- with two there as late as April 2, at Colorado Lagoon in Long Beach through April 4, at Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park in Harbor City through April 7 and at El Dorado Park in Long Beach through April 2.

**Hammond's Flycatchers** continued at Madrona Marsh in Torrance through March 26, at Vina Vieja Park in Pasadena through March 8 and at the Gardena Willows through March 10. Another was at El Dorado Park in Long Beach from February 28–March 27 (Brian Daniels). A **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** at Wardlow Park through February 27 was the only one reported.

The **Eastern Phoebe** at Apollo Park in Lancaster was reported through March 25.

Previously overlooked wintering **Cassin's Vireos** were found at Northridge Recreation Center on February 27 (Richard Barth) and at Blaisdell Park in Claremont on March 3 (Naresh Satyan).

Scarce in the lowlands was a **Brown Creeper** at North Hollywood Park on March 21 (Rebecca Marschall).

After a lengthy stay, the remarkable **Red-flanked Bluetail** at Clark Library in Los Angeles was last reported on March 22. It continued to draw good numbers of birders throughout its visit.

A **Green-tailed Towhee** was at the West San Gabriel River Parkway Nature Trail in Lakewood on February 22 (Jim Zenor).

A **Clay-colored Sparrow** remained at Madrona Marsh in Torrance through March 26 and a "**Red**" **Fox Sparrow** was at La Mirada Park in La Mirada on March 19 (Albert Linkowski).

Two **Swamp Sparrows** continued at Bonelli Regional Park through February 26, with one reported through March 20. Another continued at Los Angeles Valley College in Sherman Oaks through February 24.

Fewer in number than last year, about a half dozen **White-throated Sparrows** were either newly discovered or continued in the county.

The **Harris's Sparrow** at Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena continued through April 17. Another was at College Park in Claremont from March 5-30 (Dan Stoebel).

**Dark-eyed "Gray-headed" Juncos** continued at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas through March 4 and at Hahamongna Watershed Park in Pasadena through April 2. Others were in Glendora on March 2 (Michael Peralez) and one at College Park in Claremont on March 5 (Dan Stoebel). A **Dark-eyed "Pink-sided" Junco** was at Rancho Sierra Golf Course in the Antelope Valley on March 17 (David Bell).

Very rare in winter was a **Yellow-breasted Chat** at the Natural History Museum Nature Gardens in Los Angeles from February 25–March 12 (Kimball Garrett).

An **Orchard Oriole** was spotted in Cheviot Hills on March 30 (Chloe Cheng). A **Baltimore Oriole** was at La Mirada Park in La Mirada from March 15–17 (Jim Zenor) and another continued through March 27 at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas. Unusual on the coastal slope was a **Scott's Oriole** was at Haines Creek in Big Tujunga Wash on March 24 (David Bell).

The wintering **Blue-winged Warbler** continued at El Dorado Park in Long Beach through March 26 and was seen by many.

Seven **Black-and-white Warblers** either continued or were found over the period.

A **Lucy's Warbler** back for its second winter continued at North Weddington Park in North Hollywood through March 23. Rare in winter, **Nashville Warblers** were at the Natural History Museum's Nature Gardens on Los Angeles on February 27 (Julio Gallardo) and at the Playa Vista Riparian Corridor on February 27 (Don Sterba) and at Marine Park in Santa Monica on March 7 (Larry Schmahl).

A half dozen **Palm Warblers** were recorded over the period. The **Pine Warbler** at Long Beach Recreation Park continued through February 24 and a **Grace's Warbler** did likewise through March 31.

It's never too late to find rare wintering birds, as evidenced by the **Black-throated Green Warbler** found at Alondra Park on March 24 and present at least through April 1 (Mark & Janet Scheel).

The **Painted Redstart** that spent the winter at Brookside Park in Pasadena was reported through March 22.

A **Summer Tanager** was at Orcutt Ranch Horticultural Center Park in West Hills from February 24-March 28 (David Weeshoff). Others continued at Veteran's Park in Sylmar through April 7 and at the Village Green Condominiums in Los Angeles through February 23. One was also at the Japanese Garden at Cal State Long Beach on April 9 (Tracy Drake)

More than half of spring migration has been completed, but there is still plenty to come. Many of our western songbirds, Willow Flycatchers, Western Wood-Pewees, Yellow and Wilson's Warblers and Western Tanagers are passing through the deserts in numbers even into late May. As migration winds down, we'll see what off course passerines turn up late in the season.

May and June will offer plenty of opportunities to look for breeding birds throughout the county. Even overpopulated and heavily birded Los Angeles County has many underexplored areas, such as the long north slope of the San Gabriels. Gray Flycatcher, Plumbeous Vireo and Gray Vireo are a few of the possible breeding species here.

The higher mountains too are largely underexplored, with just a handful of well-known spots receiving significant coverage. In the rugged San Gabriel Mountains access can present a challenge, but for the interested and ambitious birder, opportunities abound.

As the past few months have shown, every park and green patch can be worth checking for the rare and regular. And speaking of regular, it's not all about the rare stuff. Our common western species are incredibly diverse, ranging from plain to spectacular, and all are very watchable in their own way.

By the time of the next column in two months, southbound shorebirds will have begun to appear. The other migration— autumn— will be underway, right in the middle of summer. 🐦



# BIRD WALKS

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON'S bird walks are for those interested in reducing their carbon footprint by birding relatively close to home. Perfect for the birder looking for an introduction to local birds and habitat.

Bird Walks are geared for the beginner/intermediate birders looking for an introduction to local birds or a less strenuous excursion. Appropriate for young bird watchers age 6 years and older. Carpooling is encouraged. Binoculars are provided on some walks as noted below. *For further information contact Eleanor Osgood at [volunteer@laudubon.org](mailto:volunteer@laudubon.org) or call (310) 839-5420.*

## OPEN WETLANDS AT BALLONA

1st Sat. of each month,  
(Except August)

May 4 & June 1  
Time 9 a.m. – Noon

The first Saturday of every month, from 9 a.m. to noon, Los Angeles Audubon Society hosts the "Open Wetlands" event at the Ballona Salt Marsh. Binoculars will be available to borrow, and volunteers will help visitors view aquatic invertebrates through microscopes, learn about the unique ecosystems found at Ballona, and view birds through powerful spotting scopes along Ballona Creek. The buckwheat is in bloom and lots of butterflies to see. Please drop-in!

Contact: *Cindy Hardin*,  
[cindyhardin@laudubon.org](mailto:cindyhardin@laudubon.org),  
(310) 301-0050

## TOPANGA STATE PARK BIRDWALK

1st Sunday of every month

May 5 & June 2  
Time: 8:00 a.m.

Leaders: *Ken Wheeland and Chris Tosdevin*

Ken and Chris will lead participants through this beautiful and diverse coastal mountain area. This is an ideal trip for a beginning birder or someone new to the area. From Ventura Blvd, take Topanga Canyon Blvd 7 miles S. Turn E uphill on Entrada Rd. Follow the signs and turn left into Trippet Ranch parking lot. From Pacific Coast Hwy, take Topanga Canyon Blvd. 5 miles to Entrada Rd. Parking fee.

Contacts: *Ken: (310) 455-1401, [ksafarri@aol.com](mailto:ksafarri@aol.com); Chris: (310) 455-1270*

## UPPER FRANKLIN CANYON / SOOKY GOLDMAN NATURE CENTER)

2nd Sunday of the month

May 12 & June 9  
Time: 8:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m.

Leader: *Eleanor Osgood*  
Join us as we take a casual walk around the ponds and trails of this urban mixed oak woodland and chaparral nature preserve. It is spring and we are likely to see the resident Wood Ducks and as well California Quail, Spotted and California Towhees and California Thrasher and Wrentit engaging in nesting activities. Some other resident birds include 3 species of hawks, Common Raven, Nuttall's Woodpecker, 2 species of wrens. We will look for migrants such as flycatchers, vireos, warblers and orioles some of which will be staying in Franklin Canyon to nest. *Meet in the main parking lot for the Sooky Goldman Nature Center.*

**Directions:** From the 101 Freeway, follow Coldwater Canyon Blvd. south for several miles to the intersection of Coldwater Canyon and Mulholland Drive (traffic signal). Make a 90 degree right turn onto Franklin Canyon Drive. There is no sign indicating the

entrance to the park until you have crossed the intersection; the turn at Franklin Canyon Road reads "Road Closed 800 Feet" and "Sunrise to Sunset"-- this is the park entrance; do not make a U-turn as this will take you onto Mulholland Drive instead of Franklin Canyon. Take Franklin Canyon Dr down to park entrance, turn at first left into the parking lot. **From Sunset Blvd:** go north on N. Beverly Drive to Coldwater Canyon Dr to Mulholland Dr. Veer left on Mulholland Drive. At the next traffic signal, make a left turn onto Franklin Canyon Dr. continue to first parking lot on the left. BINOCULARS PROVIDED.  
Contact Info: *Eleanor (310) 839-5420*

**KENNETH HAHN STATE RECREATION AREA**  
(4100 S. La Cienega Blvd, Los Angeles 90056)  
3rd Saturday of the month  
(no walks in July or August)

May 18 & June 15—Leader  
**Dick Barth**  
Time: 8:00 a.m—12:00p.m.

Leaders: *Eric and Ann Brooks, Eleanor Osgood*  
This trip covers landscaped parkland, a man-made lake and natural coastal scrub habitats within the Baldwin Hills. It is spring and we are likely to see the resident birds (a total of 26 species )such as Nuttall's

Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, Cassin Kingbirds, Song Sparrow, California Scrub-jay, California and Spotted Towhee, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Great Horned Owl engaging in nesting activities. Besides looking for spring migrants such as vireos, warblers and flycatchers, we will search for summer visitors that nest in the park such as Hooded and Bullock's Oriole, Barn Swallow, Western Kingbird and Western Bluebird.

**The park entrance** is off of La Cienega Blvd. between Rodeo Rd. and Stocker St. After passing the entrance kiosk (\$6.00 parking fee) turn into the first parking lot on the right leading to the lake. BINOCULARS PROVIDED.

**BALLONA WETLANDS BIRD WALK**  
3rd Sunday of the month  
(with the exception of December)

May 19 & June 16  
Time: 8:00 a.m.

Leaders: *Bob Shanman and Friends*  
Join us for a walk through L.A.'s only remaining saltwater marsh and the adjacent rocky jetty. Meet at the Del Rey Lagoon parking lot. Take the Marina Fwy (90) to Culver Blvd and turn left for a mile. Turn right on Pacific Ave. The lot is on the right. Lot or street parking is usually not a problem. Three hour walk. 'scopes helpful.  
Contact: *Bob 310-326-2473; [wbutorance@gmail.com](mailto:wbutorance@gmail.com)*



# ANNOUNCING A NEW WEEKLY NATURE WALK

By Eleanor Osgood, Member & Volunteer of Los Angeles Audubon Society

Los Angeles Audubon is announcing a new nature walk in partnership with THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION at their new facility in the Baldwin Hills — STONEVIEW NATURE CENTER.

## All About Nature

### Stoneview Nature Center

5950 Stoneview Dr., Culver City, CA 90232

Every Thursday morning

9:00 a.m.–10:45 a.m.

Come explore the wildlife of the Baldwin Hills. Our walks will focus on the plants and animals of the Coastal Sage Scrub habitat as well as that of the adjacent residential community. During our walks on the trails and streets that connect three nearby parks and the residential neighborhood we will document what we find with the goal of increasing our awareness, appreciation and overall knowledge of the wildlife with which we share our urban space. All knowledge levels welcome. Binoculars provided. Smart phones, cameras, field guides and field note books encouraged.

**Directions:** The park is in the small residential community of Blair Hills. Access roads are off of La Cienega south of Rodeo Rd. (look for Blair Hills sign just south of Rodeo) or off of Jefferson/Rodeo, just west of La Cienega. Contact info: Stoneview Nature Center. (310) 202-3002. The center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.





# FIELD TRIPS



Nick & Mary Freeman  
Field Trip Chairperson  
& Trip Leaders

Los Angeles Audubon's field trips often require driving to more distant destinations and more time spent in the field than do LAAS's local bird walks. No pets. No children under 12, without permission from leader please. *We do not sell, trade, or re-use contact information; cell and email simply improve our chances of contacting you at home and in the field.*

When you sign-up please provide complete contact information as stated in the write-up. Name, Address, City/Zip Code, Email address, Day-of-Event/Cell number, and an *optional/alternate* phone number— I.C.E., In Case of Emergency (home, work or friend.)

We confirm reservations and provide supplemental trip information by email reply. If you do not have convenient email, you may mail the reservation request (and fee if applicable); include a SASE; we will mail your confirmation.

## CARPOOLING

For ride sharing purposes, your contact information will be shared with the other confirmed participants unless you specify otherwise at sign-up.

## FEE REQUIRED RESERVATIONS

**Make checks fees payable to Los Angeles Audubon** (separate checks per trip)

### Mail to:

Los Angeles Audubon  
PO Box 411301  
Los Angeles CA 90041-8301

## MORE INFORMATION

**Email:** [membership@laaudubon.org](mailto:membership@laaudubon.org) | (323) 876-0202

Please visit [www.laaudubon.org](http://www.laaudubon.org) for updates to Los Angeles Audubon's field trip listings.

For more information: (323) 876-0202 or [membership@laaudubon.org](mailto:membership@laaudubon.org)

## Saturday, May 11 Tejon Ranch

\$20 FEE, MINORS FREE, MAX SIGN-UP OF 12, MIN 6

*(As of April 30th, this event is fully booked)*

Leader: **Louis Tucker**. Visits to the Ranch are by special arrangement with escort only, as one could easily get lost on the web of gated dirt roads covering this huge working ranch. Hopefully the ranch will have dried out by May from the winter storms we've so desperately needed (and gotten!) This is spring bird migration peak time. This will be a great time to see various passerine species: warblers, flycatchers, bluebirds, and other songbirds. There are resident Red-tails, Burrowing Owls, Golden Eagles, and Prairie Falcons, which are all out there to be found. Even Swainson's Hawks may be nesting! California Condor is also a possibility if it's a bright sunny day. There also is a chance of catching sight of some Pronghorn Antelope. FRS radios and scopes useful.

We will meet at Denny's in Sylmar. Take the Roxford Exit off of the 5 Fwy. Denny's can be seen on the east side of the Fwy. 12861 Encinitas Ave. Sylmar. Be prepared to carpool and leave from there at 7 a.m. to be at the 300 St. West Gate at 8 am. At the Tejon Ranch gate, we will transfer to ranch vehicles, for a number of reasons - first and foremost being safety - as roads on the ranch can be treacherous. Bring lunch, as we will be out most of the day. **Any decision to cancel due to rain will be made at Denny's, in which case those in attendance will be sent refunds by Tejon Ranch.**

LIMITED SIGN-UPS: 12 participants only.

HOW TO SIGN-UP: Please pre-register by pulling up the Tejon Ranch website at: [tejon-conservancy.org](http://tejon-conservancy.org) / The Ranch / View All Events (bottom) / and click on May 11. Pay \$20 at this website with a credit card. Then, contact Susan by e-mail at [membership@laaudubon.org](mailto:membership@laaudubon.org) and inform her that your party is paid up for the trip. If you receive a fairly prompt email confirmation, you have made the cut! (NO drop-ins.) Include the •email address, •cell phone number and •Zip Code for each participant. For more information call: (323) 876-0202.

## Friday, May 17

### Small Owls of the San Gabriels #2

(Sold Out & Wait-listed)

NO FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP

Leaders **Mary and Nick Freeman**. We will be looking for Flammulated, Saw-whet, Northern Pygmy and Western Screech-Owls. Sign up, and meet at 6:00 p.m. on the frontage road for Angeles Forest Hwy just north of the 210 Fwy in La Canada.

## Sunday, May 19

### Big Morongo Canyon

NO FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP OF 15

Leaders **Mary and Nick Freeman**. Meet at 8:00 AM in the preserve parking lot, or 7:00 AM at Covington Park next door. Breeding desert and oasis birds such as Brown-crested and Vermilion Flycatchers, Summer Tanager, Scott's and Hooded Orioles, Yellow-breasted Chat and late-migrating *Empidonax* flycatchers. To get there, take the 10 Fwy E about 17



miles past Banning to Hwy 62 N. Pass through the town of Morongo Valley, take a right on East Dr., then a left into the preserve (or straight to Covington Park). Bring lunch, water, sensible clothing and sun block. Yucca Valley and Desert Hot Springs offer nearby accommodations, or camp at Joshua Tree NP. LIMITED SIGN-UP OF 15. TO SIGN-UP: Send email to: [membership@laaudubon.org](mailto:membership@laaudubon.org), provide names(s), cell phone #'s and your Zip Code. For more information call (323) 876-0202. Contact information WILL BE released to others inquiring about carpooling unless requested otherwise.

---

### Friday, June 21

#### Small Owls of the San Gabriels #3

(Sold Out – Wait-listed)

NO FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP

Leaders **Mary** and **Nick Freeman**. We will be looking for Flammulated, Saw-whet, Northern Pygmy and Western Screech-Owls. Sign up, and meet at 6:00 p.m. on the frontage road for Angeles Forest Hwy just north of the 210 Fwy in La Canada.

### Thursday thru Sunday, July 4-7

#### Owls & other Birds of the Southern Sierra

\$140 FEE,

LIMITED SIGN-UP: MAX 10, MIN 6.

Leaders **Mary** and **Nick Freeman**. We will be renting a different summer home this year, which should be just as nice as last years'. Flammulated and Spotted Owls have been seen in multiples almost every year. Saw-whet (adult & juv.) and Pygmy Owl are less reliable, but we will look hard! Saw-whet was very obliging last year! During days, we will search out Pileated Woodpecker, Pacific Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and perhaps Goshawk, Dipper or Evening Grosbeak! Meeting time and location in Ponderosa is still being firmed up. Couples will probably be prioritized, and singles in sleeping bags will be wait-listed until reservations open up on June 15. Coordinate your contribution for the Thursday potluck with Mary. LAAS will provide a weenie roast one other night, and we always have plenty of leftovers for a third dinner! For more information call (323) 876-0202, and leave a voice message if no answer.

### Saturday, July 20

#### Big Bear Area

NO FEE, LIMITED SIGN-UP FOR DAY BIRDING AND / OR NIGHT OWLING

Leaders **Mary** and **Nick Freeman**. Get a hotel room for July 20 (or wake up really early), and a room for July 21 if you plan to dine and owl with the Freemans. Target birds include Williamson's and Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Calliope and Rufous Hummers, mountain finches, White-headed Woodpecker, and Mountain Quail. Meet in the Aspen Glen Picnic Area parking lot in Big Bear at 7:30 a.m. Take Hwy 18 or 38 to Big Bear Lake, then proceed about half way along the south side of the lake on Hwy 18 (Big Bear Blvd.) and turn south on Tulip Lane. The lot will be on the south side of this short street. Bring lunch for a full day, and a **Forest Service Adventure Pass**.

**SIGN-UP:** Email sign-up mandatory. Send email to: [membership@laaudubon.org](mailto:membership@laaudubon.org). Provide •name(s) •email addresses, & •cell phone #s and wait for email confirmation. 🦉